

Technical Information:

Date: 06/08/05
Subject: Coliforms
Product: Bacteria

Coliforms are a broad class of bacteria found in our environment, including the feces of man and other warm-blooded animals. The presence of coliform bacteria in drinking water may indicate a possible presence of harmful, disease-causing organisms. Coliform bacteria are not necessarily pathogenic or dangerous to humans. However coliforms are generally found in higher amounts and are hardier than other pathogenic bacteria. Therefore the presence of coliforms is used as a possible indicator of fecal contamination and the presence of other pathogenic microorganisms associated with fecal contamination.

Treatments of coliforms involves chlorination which adds a concentration of the chemical chlorine or chloramines to the water supply, where the oxidizing ability of this chemical "burns up" the organic contaminants in the water. Chlorine can effectively treat biological pathogens like coliform bacteria.